DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 241 867 CG 017 345

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TITLE The Loved Ones: Aging Parents and Their Favorite Children.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. on Aging (DHHS/NIH), Bethesda, MD.
PUB DATE Oct 83
GRANT NIA-12938
NOTE 35p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council on Family Relations (St. Paul, MN, October 11-15, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Affection; Aging (Individuals); Attachment Behavior; Birth Order; *Emotional Response; Family Life; Family Structure; *Parent Child Relationship; *Parents; Psychological Needs; Sex Differences
IDENTIFIERS *Adult Children; *Parent Favoritism

ABSTRACT

Despite the cultural norm that parents should love their children equally, parents do differ in their preferential treatment toward their children. To obtain information about the characteristics of the loved ones and the loving ones in parent child relationships among aging parents and adult children, 124 couples (in which the men graduated from a large Catholic university between 1936-1940) were interviewed about the kind and number of contacts they had with their children who had left home. In addition, each spouse separately completed a questionnaire on sociometric issues and feelings about their relationship with their children. An analysis of the results showed that gender was more important than spatial closeness in determining the loved and loving child in a family. However, proximity had a strong positive and enforcing effect in the adult daughter's contact with her parents. Parents' satisfaction with the relationship was not gender specific and competing loyalties were important in determining relationship frequency and intimacy. Disagreement with children had a negative influence on the relationship, with the loved and loving children having very few disagreements with their parents, particularly in regard to the child's treatment of siblings. Fathers' attitudes were related to which child received the most comfort and sympathy, while mothers' attitudes were related to who gave the most comfort and sympathy. Overall, the majority of loved and loving children were first or second born, had no disagreements with fathers, lived less than 50 miles from parents, and were female. (BL)

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THE LOVED ONES:
AGING PARENTS AND THEIR FAVORITE CHILDREN*

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THE LOVED ONES: AGING PARENTS AND THEIR FAVORITE CHILDREN

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Among the social prescriptions regulating parents' relations with their children is the norm of equal attachment. Despite this cultural norm that parents should love their children equally, however, parents do differentiate among them. Not all of their offspring are equally lovable. By the time parents are in the post-launching stage of the life cycle, the resulting favoritism shows up in the differential amount of contact they have with their children and the special affection they have for one of them. This was apparent in the interviews we conducted with parents of adult children concerning interpersonal relations.

Here is an example taken from one interview transcript. When we asked the parents in our interviews how they felt about the activities, the joys and the sorrows, the pleasures and the pains, the satisfactions and dissatisfactions in the contact they had with each of their launched children, one mother responded as follows: "Yes, we feel fine in general"; but then the husband continued differentiating this statement for each of their four children: "First child: He is divorced and I think it affected him a little, we are not always comfortable with him. Second child: Same problem. Has emotional problem over divorce also. We are concerned about that. Third child: She has children. Her marriage is stable. We feel good with her. Fourth child: Have best relationship with him because he is the closest. We can lean on him." We were able to compare the characteristics of those children who had exchanged the maximum amount of comfort and sympathy with their parents with their less favored siblings. This paper will present what we found in answer to our question, who are the loved ones and the loving ones in the family and what are the reasons and social causes of parents preferential treatment?

The couple's remarks given above provide some preliminary idea about the differing characteristics of children. The third and fourth children were closest to their parents in the preceding year while the parents were not at ease with their first child and worried about the second. The remarks also demonstrate how crucial it is to obtain data on every single relationship in the family. Not only did we interview the husband and wife jointly and separately, but we obtained data on a variety of contact quantity and quality variables for each child in the family. Thus, our research can focus on differences within families, while most previous research has focused attention on kinship interaction across families. Kinship research has singled out a variety of characteristics that increase a child's probability of interaction with his or her aging parents, once s/he is launched. Only by taking an inside look into intrafamily relations, however can we find out whether these characteristics hold for the loved child within particular families.

Social norms governing the contact between aging parents and their children prescribe different responsibilities for children and parents in dealing with each other. Parsons (1964) and other functionalists have remarked on the women's role as the expressive leader in the modern American family system, a role which includes the maintenance of kinship ties, and is assumed by the wife/mother. Interfamily research has convincingly shown that women are indeed the kinkeepers in the American family system (e.g., Adams, 1968, 1972; Aldous, 1967; Fischer, 1981). Not only do females remain in close contact to their parents, but once daughters establish their own families their parents are given precedence over their spouses' parents.

Adams (1968, 1972) has also remarked on the important role of birth order in determining the contact between children and their aging parents. He found

that mothers felt themselves to be closer to their younger children once they are adults, with middle children feeling more neglected than older or younger ones. While it was once the task of the oldest child to take care of the parents, it appears that today it has become more and more the task of the last children leaving home to keep affectionate and close ties to parents, while the older children can be more independent.

Besides social norms governing kinship relations according to gender and birth order, shared interests and experience between parents and children can exert a positive influence on kinship ties. The stage in the life cycle of every child should affect parent-child contact in the post-launching years. (Compare Leigh, 1982.) Wilen (1979) found evidence for the tendency toward improved relationships over time from the parents' perspective. The birth of grandchildren draws parents and children closer together. Fischer (1981) found that mothers and daughters with children re-evaluate each other with the daughters' acceptance of the wife and mother roles long held by the older women and these shared roles and resultant interests are associated with the generations becoming more closely involved in each others' lives. We do not know yet whether such a finding holds true in intergenerational relationships involving kin of the opposite sex. But it is also true that the child's life cycle stage may exert either a positive or a negative effect on their relationships with parents in later years. There is an overload of demands on expressive and instrumental resources of the "children" when they are old enough to have adult children and still have living parents, themselves (e.g., Streib, 1972; Silverstone and Hyman, 1976; Hagestad, 1981). The pre-retirement parents we talked to or their own children may be in this middle or bridge generation

which will affect the degree to which they have time for close and frequent contacts with older and younger generations.

Competing loyalties on the part of the children or parents can also put limits on kinship interaction. Children, who are married, have children of their own, and are gainfully employed, do have more commitments and less time for the maintenance of kinship ties than their unmarried, not employed siblings. Baruch and Barnett (1983), for example, found that for their respondents, daughters' relationships with their mothers provided more emotional gratification to the extent that the daughters lacked other social roles such as that involved in parenthood.

Shared interests and experience, however, go beyond age-related issues, and should be important also in areas involving parents' cherished beliefs and values. Religious affiliation and commitment, as well as educational achievement at least on the part of the sons, can be a source of shame or pride, of tension or joy within the family and should in turn affect the intimacy and closeness between the generations. The past history of the relationship between parents and children, which might range from mutual understanding and solidarity over such issues to clashes and severe strain, will influence the interaction in later life (Hess and Waring, 1978).

Ecological constraints are the most prominent and well researched factors known to hinder kinship ties. Lee (1980) in his review of the kinship literature of the 1970s mentions the importance of the distance children live away from home as the single most important variable interfering with frequent parent-child interaction. However, besides decreasing the actual amount of contact, the farther a child lives away from home the fewer expectations might

parents have for such an exchange, a factor possibly important for explaining discrepancies between actual amount and perceived quality of contact.

It is a largely unexamined question how the factors isolated by prior research complement and interact with each other and how they operate within families; not across families. As in small group research (Shaw, 1981), we should find that the larger the family the more differentiation there is among family members' sociometric and individual characteristics. Terhune (1974) remarks that with each additional child in the family, family relationships become more complex. Parents as well as children, therefore, are freer to choose those family members with whom contacts prove most rewarding.

To summarize the factors that appear to be related to which adult child parents favor, parents choose the child with whom they have the most shared interests among children who are in geographical proximity. Since their value commonalities begin with the years they spent together in the same residence, a joint concern with family matters is the initial "glue" for the intergenerational bonding. Other interests such as shared religious and educational commitments can flow from this. It is little wonder then that daughters generally are the loved ones. They are reared to specialize in adult roles located in the family and are more bound by the norms that demand close contacts between parents and children. Moreover, the competing loyalties they develop with spouses and children underline family responsibilities, norms, feelings and interests that daughters have acquired from their parents.

METHODOLOGY

To obtain information relevant to the characteristics of the loved one among children, we interviewed a sample of 124 couples in which the man had

graduated from a large Catholic university in the years 1936 - 1940. As part of a larger study on kinship interaction and family size, our choice of population to sample was designed to increase the probability of locating larger families than would be the case with a sample from the general population. Moreover, our couples were still young enough to be in reasonably good health and have sufficient financial resources. Thus, the intergenerational contacts that did occur were relatively voluntary and the effect of family size was not confounded with these other factors. Among those couples contacted and determined to be eligible to participate, complete data were collected from 53%.[1]

Husbands and wives were interviewed together about the kind and number of contacts they had with their children who had left home. Each spouse also separately completed a questionnaire designed to obtain information on sociometric issues, and on the different feelings of husbands and wives about the relationship with each of their children. We considered the highest ranking child in each family on receiving comfort from their parents as the loved one in the intergenerational network of parent-child relationships and the reasons for their priority. From these data, it was also possible to determine which child gave the most comfort to their parents and so could be termed, the loving child.

It was necessary to separate the analyses of the most loved and loving child according to the criterion of comfort giving. We found that there was not necessarily an overlap between these children within particular families. The phi coefficient though highly significant statistically was only .21. This analysis was also supplemented by comparisons of these focal children and their siblings within and across families involving a variety of potentially relevant variables.

FINDINGS

Family Size. Our data support Terhune's (1974) contention that family complexity increases with family size. Table 1 shows the relationship between

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

the number of children in a specific family and the variation (range) of scores on specific variables among the children. Since our research is based on parent-adult child relations we also included the children who had left home in our analyses. It demonstrates that larger families are more differentiated not only with respect to demographic and sociometric characteristics, but also with respect to parents' perception of the quality of the relationship with each of their launched children. This is particularly true of fathers. The range of mothers' satisfaction, happiness, and disappointment is generally less dependent on the number of children in the family than is true for fathers.[2]

However, family size is less important when we turn to a comparison between children who are favored in the exchange of comfort and sympathy and their siblings. In analyses not presented, we found the number of variables which display a significant difference across family size is not larger than one would expect by chance occurrence alone. Family size does not affect the characteristics of the loved children. (A list of the variables used in this and the following analyses as well as their coding scheme can be found in Appendix 1.)

Loved One Characteristics. Table 2 shows the results of t-tests comparing the favorite children in the exchange of comfort and sympathy with the average of their siblings.[3] In general, being physically close and female

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

increases the probability that a child scores highest in her family on the

frequency of giving comfort and sympathy to parents and receiving it. Beyond this, the children receiving and giving most comfort and sympathy display quite different characteristics. While frequent mass attendance and, surprisingly, in terms of our earlier thinking, lower, not higher, educational achievement increase the probability of being favored by parents, they do not influence children's attachments to parents. Fewer disagreements over the child's treatment of siblings is related to comfort and sympathy giving by parents. The giving of comfort and sympathy by children is related to fewer disagreements by father and mother with the child's treatment of parents and fewer disagreements by the mother with the child's childrearing behavior and frequency of get togethers with parents. Lacking the possibility of causal inferences we can state that mothers' agreements with the children are related to their general perceptions of the children's comforting behavior to members of their parental and conjugal families.

We also found that the loving children in terms of giving the most comfort and sympathy were also more often chosen by their fathers and mothers as confidants when there were problems. Thus our indicators show some construct validity. But note that the loved child does not generally perform the confidant role. Understandably, parents seem to prefer to keep their relations with the child to whom they give the most comfort unproblematical.

Competing loyalties as measured by parents' wanting to tell their children they were busy, as well as birth order, marital status, and parenthood by themselves are not significant. Parenthood, however, is related to parents' expressions of disagreements with their children concerning the latters' performance as fathers or mothers.

Stimulated by the idea of the AID (Sonquist, Baker and Morgan, 1971; Sonquist, 1970), we tried to develop the profile of the child receiving or giving most

comfort and sympathy in order to see more closely how the single characteristics distinguishing the favored from the less favored children within a family interact with each other. We based our analysis on bivariate statistics rather than analysis of covariance in order to avoid an over interpretation of our data and idiosyncratic results due to our small sample size.[4]

All variables were cross-tabulated for the two groups of children and phi-values as well as X^2-statistics were calculated in the first step of the analysis. The item having the highest phi-value was used to split children into those having the characteristic and those not having this characteristic. The remaining items were cross-tabulated with the two groups of children and again those with the highest phi-value were selected. This procedure was followed as long as the X^2 probability was significant beyond .10. Splits of groups with less than 20 cases in them should be interpreted cautiously because of unstable results with low expected cell frequencies. Figure 1 and Figure 2 summarize the results of this procedure. The "N" in each box indicates the number of children in the sample scoring highest on comfort giving or receiving who have the given characteristic plus all hierarchically preceding characteristics. The % indicates the percentage of children of all those eligible who scored highest on our indicators. So, for example, Figure 1 shows that 64 female children (twice as many as male children) score highest on receipt of comfort and sympathy. Dividing this by .38 would reveal that there are 168 female children eligible for the comparison at this stage of the split.

In Figure 1 we see that sex of the child is most highly related to being the loved one with females as hypothesized being most chosen. Geographical proximity is the next most related variable to comfort-giving by parents, provided that the child is a female. If the receiver of comfort and sympathy is a male child, thenit is the father's wish sometimes to tell the child that he is too busy to do something which is most related to being the loved one in the family.

It is interesting to note that three of four children having the following characteristics are the loved ones in each family: being first or second born, having no disagreement with the father regarding the treatment of her siblings; living less than 50 miles from the parent's home;and being female. In contrast, only about one in twenty (6%) of the children who are male, whom the father never wanted to tell that he was too busy, and with whom the father disagreed regarding the treatment of siblings were the loved ones in the families. Although females are more often chosen, underlining the role of women as kinkeepers, a father's satisfaction with the relationship to both his sons and his daughters is significant in determining who is the loved one in the family. As in so many other areas of family life fathers' views are influential in choice behavior of couples.

The opposite side of the loved one coin is the child who is most attentive to her/his parents,/ the loving one. The data show gender of the child also to be the variable most highly related to which child gives most comfort to parents. Daughters are most solicitous. In their case, it is again proximity which is the next most related variable. If sons are chosen, father's agreement with how the child is raising his/own children, is the next most related item. More than three out of four (76%) children having all the following characteristics are the/most loving children in the families: being female; living less than 50 miles from the parents' home; and having no disagreement with the mother regarding the treatment of parents and the frequency of visits. In contrast, only one in twenty of the children who are sons having some disagreements with the father regarding the raising of their own children and with the mother regarding the treatment of parents is the loving child in the family.

Thus, not only do our results confirm the importance of gender and proximity for the closeness of kinship ties, but they point to a cumulative effect of these two variables. Beyond this, the satisfaction of both parents with aspects of the quality of parent-child relationships, as measured by the disagreement items, is important for the amount of comfort giving and receiving.

Sibling Comparisons on Other Contact Variables. In the last part of this paper, we want to take a closer look at gender differences, differences in the marital status and differing competing loyalties among launched children and their effects on a broader set of indicators of parent-child contacts. Variables included are 35 indicators of quantity and quality of kinship contact. Concerning the frequency of contact between parents and children, 6 of a total of 17 tests showed significant differences between launched sons and daughters in the family, and three of a total of 18 variables showed significant differences regarding the parents' perceptions of the quality

of relationship with their launched sons and daughters. The significant results are summarized in the left column of Table 3.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Four of the eight items measuring the frequency of contact from children to parents display significant differences between brothers and sisters. In addition to their primary importance as givers of comfort and sympathy, noted earlier in Figure 2, daughters are also more active than their brothers in gift giving and paying bills for their parents, phoning and writing letters to parents, as well as helping parents with shopping.

Two of the nine items measuring the frequency of contact from parents to children are also significant. Parents not only provide more comfort and sympathy to their daughters, which we saw in Figure 1, but they also write or phone their daughters more than their sons. All of these findings lend further support to the idea that women are the kinkeepers in the American family.

Parents' perceptions of the quality of relationship with their children, on the other hand, show less gender differentiation. Both parents are significantly more often disappointed with their sons, and the fathers disagree more often with them concerning their rearing of their own children. Fifteen other items measuring the perceived quality of the relationship between parents and children, however, do not show gender-specific differences. Thus, the finding indicates that quantity and quality of kinship contact are different dimensions of interaction and frequent interaction does not necessarily lead to greater satisfaction. Parents seem to expect sons to be less active and thus are not dissatisfied with the relationship if this occurs.

The next issue we explored was competing loyalties as they increase or decrease over the life span. In data not presented here, we found no significant differences between parents who still had one or more of their own parents alive and those with all parents deceased regarding the frequency or perceived quality of contact between parents and their children. Thus,

contrary to the hypothesis that the existence of three generations of a family might sever kinship ties (e.g., Hagestad, 1981), in our sample the presence of parents' parents does not affect the ties between parents and their launched children. The parents as the bridge generation do not appear to be so overloaded with responsibilities for their parents that it affects contacts with their own children. However, the children did display some variation in the amount of contact they exchanged with parents by varying commitments. We conducted t-tests contrasting married launched children with their never married siblings. As can be seen in the second column of Table 3, five out of a total of 34 t-tests comparing married and unmarried children on a variety of contact quality and quantity items were significant.

There is a slight trend for unmarried children to help in and around the house of their parents more often than their married siblings, while the latter receive such support no more/no less often from their parents. Also, there is no significant difference in any of the affectional quantity items. Among the quality items, father's overall satisfaction with the relationship is significantly greater if the child is married. This is the only quality item which shows a significant difference between married and unmarried children; none of the wives' answers regarding the perceived closeness of the ties to their children is significant. Thus, married and unmarried children vary in the frequency of exchange of instrumental activities, but not so much in affectional or intimate aspects of the relationship to parents. While work or their own family demands decrease the amount of help married children give parents, those children's need for help can level out inequalities between parents and their married and single children. Intergenerational similarities in experience, at least with regard to marital status, appear to be associated with parental perceptions of happy intergenerational relationships.

In order to see the effect of competing loyalties more clearly we combined three indicators of children's competing loyalties -- marital status, employment status, parental status -- into a single measure of children's competing loyalties. A high score would indicate that the child is a parent, married and currently employed. Since gender proved to be of such importance for kinship interaction, we compared sons and daughters with the highest score on the competing loyalties variable in a family to their same-gender siblings with fewer competing loyalties. The results are displayed in the two right columns of Table 3.

For sons, seven of a total of 34 t-tests were significant, while for daughters there were only two significant results. It is interesting to note that for sons competing loyalties do make a significant difference regarding the quantity of contact they exchange with their parents on six of 17 indicators. In five of these six cases, sons with the highest competing loyalties are least involved in exchanges with their parents.

Work or familial responsibilities do not affect the amount of contact parents exchange with their daughters. The socially prescribed role of women as kin-keepers seems to override any effect of competing loyalties and to result in rather stable and constant relationships between parents and their launched daughters, while sons' increase in competing loyalties calls for a reorganization in the frequency and above all the direction of help exchanged.

Regarding qualitative indicators of parent-child contact, the only areas where parents perceive significant differences between sons and daughters with many commitments and their same-gender siblings with fewer are disagreement items. Mothers disagree more often with their sons having most competing loyalties in how they treat their siblings, and fathers have considerably more disagreements with their daughters having fewer competing loyalties regarding the frequency of

get togethers and the treatment of parents. Fathers obviously expect higher involvement with their daughters having fewer binding commitments. Thus, the two groups of children actually displayed differences although this was much weaker in the case of the daughters, where no quantity of contact item was affected.

CONCLUSION

Our research design is unique in asking who are the loved and loving children in a family. Instead of categorizing all the adult children in our families and their parents together in our analyses as is customary, we carefully maintained the identity of each family. Thus we know for specific families the relationships parents have with particular sons or daughters. Our findings are consistent in some respects with others' research using interfamily and not intrafamily data on intergenerational relations. The importance of gender and proximity for adult child and parent contact across families is apparent, and our research confirms with some modification the critical nature of these two variables on the individual family level. Gender in our research proved to be more important in determining the loved and loving child in a family than spatial closeness, but proximity had a strong positive and enforcing effect regarding the adult daughter's contact with her parents. It was not, however, significant for the contact sons had with their parents.

While gender proved to be important in determining the frequency of contact between parents and children, parents' satisfaction with the relationship was not gender specific, probably a reflection of the higher expectations parents do have for the frequency of contact with their daughters. Our findings, thus, go beyond demonstrating the importance of gender and spatial proximity for determining why parents favor children in interaction and affectional closeness. Competing loyalties proved to be important for determining the

frequency and in part the intimacy in the relationship between aging parents and their launched children. In contrast to predictions from other researchers, however, we did not find that parents' belonging to a bridge-generation had fewer contacts with their children.

Fathers' as well as mothers' disagreement items proved to be of importance throughout. Disagreement with children which might indicate disparate interests and differing value orientations between parents and children generally has a negative influence on the relationship between parents and children. The loved and loving children in the family usually have very few disagreements with their parents. Too many disagreements make children unlikely to be especially loved or loving members of the family. Fathers' amount of disagreement in different areas proved to be equally if not more important for kinship interaction than mothers'. Even if mothers and daughters again proved to be kinkeepers, fathers and sons nonetheless do have their say and influence in the preservation of kinship ties. If we assume that these parents coming of age in the late 1930s or early 1940s held traditional marital roles and values, the difference in the most loving and loved children may be explained as follows. Fathers' attitudes, as the more powerful member of the couple, seem to be more related to which child receives the most comfort and sympathy. The attitudes of mothers, who are expected to be aware of and care about family problems, are more salient with respect to which child gives the most comfort and sympathy.

Structural variables and an absence of disagreements suggesting shared interests and values interact to account for close and affectionate bonds between parents and children and for favoritism among children. Only when we gain a fuller understanding of this interaction will we be able to understand the dynamics of kinship contact and the "whys" and "nows" of the most loved and loving children in parent-child relations.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The number of children in the families sampled ranges from one to eleven, with an average family size of just over six persons. The parents in our sample tend to be in their early-to-mid 60s in age, with the fathers averaging about 2.5 years older than their wives. The launched children average just over 30 years of age, and 74% of our parents have seen all their children leave home. The fathers in the sample are concentrated in professional, technical, or managerial occupations, with over 75% of those who are still employed in jobs of this sort. Almost one-third of our fathers have already retired, but bivariate correlation analysis did not reveal significantly different findings for the two groups of employed or retired husband/fathers.

[2]Ranges were calculated as the maximum minus the minimum score launched children in each family achieved on a particular variable.

[3]Here and in analyses to be reported later, if children in a family tied on a variable, the case was eliminated. This is the reason for the different Ns associated with the variables.

[4]Since the AID programs either require data sets of a thousand cases or more (Sonquist, Baker and Morgan, 1971), or are in a computer language incompatible with our computer (Sonquist, 1970), we were not able to use either AID computer program.

TABLE 1

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN FAMILY SIZE AND INTRAFAMILIAL VARIATION ON SELECTED INDICATORS

Variation:	Total # of children	# of launched children
Parents' Perceptions		
Changes in husband's satisfaction with the amount of contact he has with each of his children	.36***	.37***
Same for wife	.24***	.32***
Husband's frequency of disappointment with each of his children	.53***	.53***
Same for wife	.40***	.43***
Husband's overall happiness and satisfaction with the relationship to each of his children	.40***	.35***
Same for wife	.22**	.26***
# of children each child wants to have	.30**	.29**
Children's Characteristics		
Marital status (wedding of child happened/not happened)	.44***	.45***
Current physical health	.10 n.s.	.15 n.s.
Frequency of mass attendance	.27***	.34***
Residential distance from parents (miles)	.11 n.s.	.16 n.s.
Level of education	.55***	.56***
Religious affiliation of spouses (Catholic: yes/no)	.35***	.39***
Occupational achievement (Duncan SEI)	.37***	.43***
Family life cycle stage	.57***	.68***

TABLE 2

Variable	Paired Comparison Between the Children Receiving Most Comfort (+) with Those Children's Siblings (-)		Paired Comparison Between the Children Giving Most Comfort and Sympathy (+) to Parents with Those Children's Siblings (-)	
	N	T-value	N	T-value
SEX	68	3.09**	48	3.41***
PROXIMITY	83	-2.11*	56	-1.98*
MARITAL STATUS	65	.11	43	1.63
PARENTHOOD	60	1.61	39	1.34
MASS	68	2.50**	45	1.41
TELL-FATHER	28	1.28	15	1.62
TELL-MOTHER	24	-.20	12	1.92
BIRTHORDER	77	-.86	52	-.73
CHOSEN-FATHER	75	1.33	55	2.41*
CHOSEN-MOTHER	82	1.92	53	5.08***
EDUCATION	77	-2.74**	50	1.20
CHILDREARING-FATHER	36	-.36	21	.64
CHILDREARING-MOTHER	55	.53	28	2.08*
SIBS-FATHER	45	1.98*	33	.97
SIBS-MOTHER	51	2.14*	37	1.79
PARENTS-FATHER	44	.74	31	3.26**
PARENTS-MOTHER	33	1.78	21	3.19**
GETTOGETHER-FATHER	51	.16	43	1.01
GETTOGETHER-MOTHER	37	-.18	26	2.62**

TABLE 3

WITHIN-FAMILY COMPARISON REGARDING QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF PARENT-CHILD CONTACT
(only significant results are displayed in the table) [a]

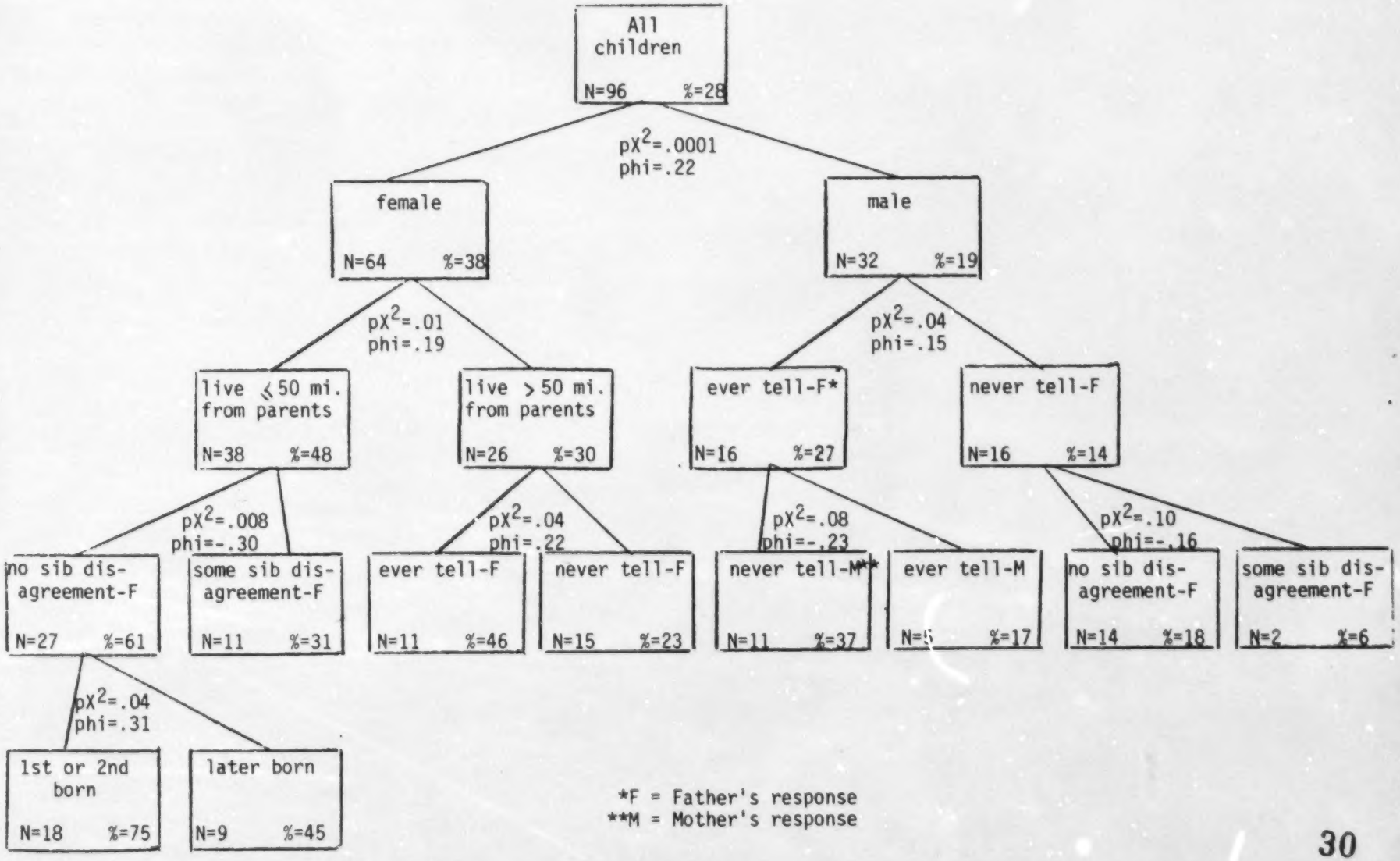
Variable	Daughters (-) vs Sons (+)		Married (+) vs Unmarried (-) Children		Sons with the highest competing loyalties score (-) vs their brothers (+)		Daughters with the highest competing loyalties score (-) vs their sisters (+)	
	N	T	N	T	N	T	N	T
# of gifts and paying bills $50 or less - P to C					77	+3.71***		
# of gifts and paying bills over $50 - P to C					78	+2.54**		
frequency of providing transportation - P to C			63	-2.89**	78	+3.22**		
frequency of help with housework, minor household repairs, yardwork, carcare - P to C			63	2.15*	78	-2.75**		
frequency of providing comfort and sympathy when someone was upset - P to C	88	-3.24**						
frequency of writing letters and visiting over the phone - P to C	88	-3.21**						
# of gifts and paying bills $50 or less - C to P	88	-2.96**						
frequency of providing transportation - C to P			63	-2.17*				
frequency of help with housework - C to P					78	+4.10***		

Variable	Daughters (-) vs Sons (+) N	T	Married (+) vs Unmarried (-) Children N	T	Sons with the highest competing loyalties score (-) vs their brothers (+) N	T	Daughters with the highest competing loyalties score (-) vs their sisters (+) N	T
# of times helped with shopping - C to P	88	-2.59**	63	-2.01*	78	+2.47*		
frequency of providing comfort and sympathy when someone was upset - C to P	88	-2.70**						
frequency of writing letters and visiting over the phone - C to P	88	-4.38***						
frequency of disappointment with child - F	87	+3.30***						
amount of agreement with how child is raising the children - F	53	-2.54**	n.a.		n.a.			n.a.
amount of agreement with child regarding the treatment of parents - F							53	-2.96**
amount of agreement with child regarding frequency of get togethers - F							53	-3.01**
overall happiness and satisfaction with the relationship to child - F			63	2.27*				
frequency of disappointment with child - M	87	+2.33*						
amount of agreement regarding child's treatment of brothers and sisters - M					74	+2.00*		

[a]Variables on which the analyses showed non statistically significant results are the following: frequency of providing childcare - P to C; frequency of providing care and help during illness - P to C; # of times helped with shopping - P to C; # of gifts or paying bills $50 and over - C to P; frequency of providing care and help during illness - C to P; satisfaction with the amount of contact with child - F; change in the satisfaction with the amount of contact with child - F; satisfaction with the relationship to spouse of the child - F; amount of agreement with how child is treating brothers and sisters - F; satisfaction with the amount of contact - M; change in the amount of contact with child - M; satisfaction with the relationship to spouse of the child - M; amount of agreement with how child is raising children - M; amount of agreement with child regarding the treatment of parents - M; amount of agreement with child regarding the frequency of get togethers - M; overall happiness and satisfaction with the relationship to each child - M.

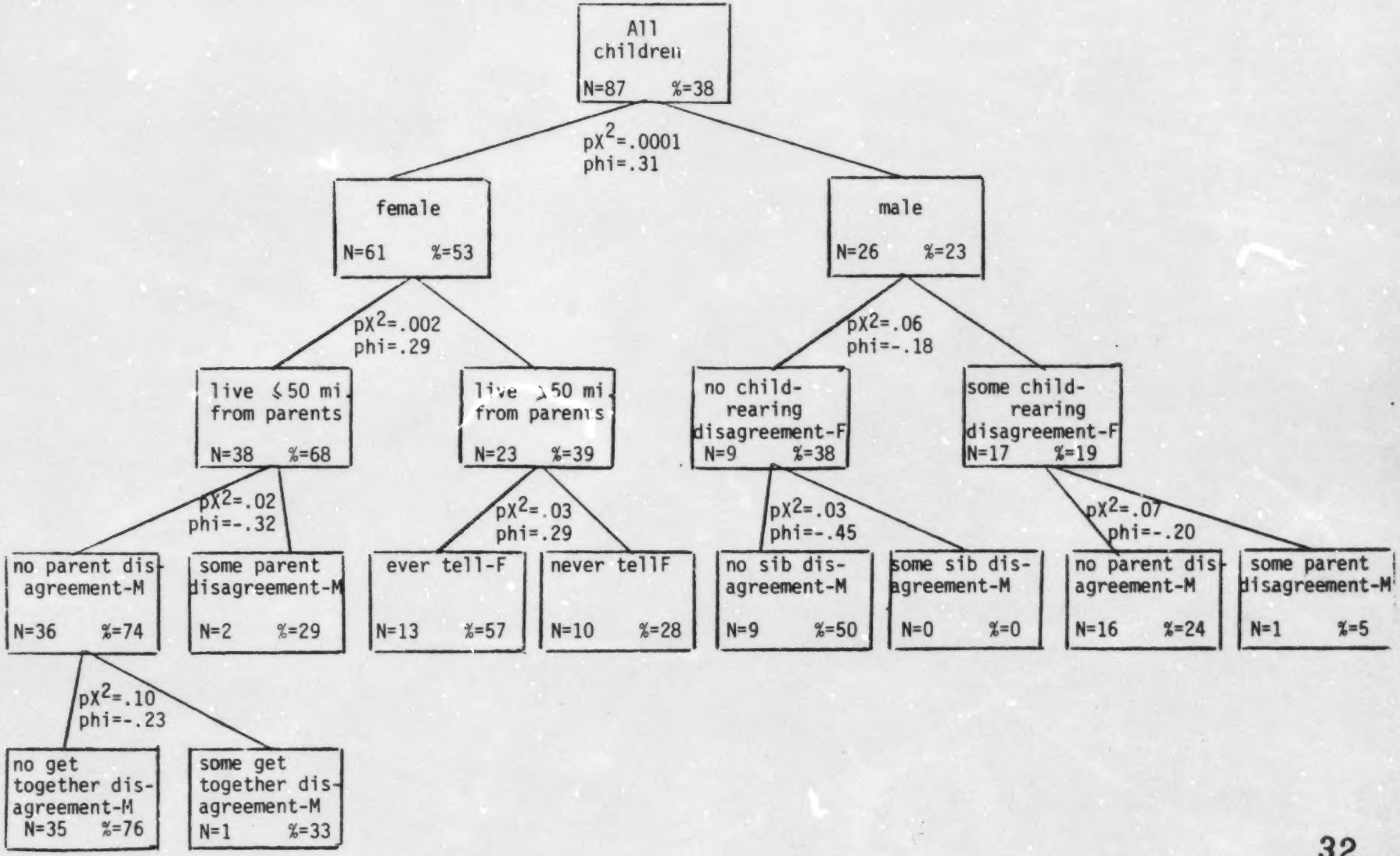
[b]C = Child; P = Parents; M = Mother's response; F = Father's response

Figure 1: Characteristics of the Child Receiving Most Comfort and Sympathy from Parents



*F = Father's response
**M = Mother's response

Figure 2: Characteristics of the Child Giving Most Comfort and Sympathy to Parents



APPENDIX I

Variable Name	Explanation
SEX	Male (1); Female (2)
PROXIMITY	Living more than 50 miles away (0); Living within 50 miles (1)
MARITAL STATUS	Married (0); Never married (1)
PARENTHOOD	Child is parent (0); is not a parent (1)
MASS	Weekly mass attendance (1); Less than weekly mass attendance (0)
TELL-FATHER	Father wanted to tell child that he is too busy (1); Never wanted to tell this (0)
TELL-MOTHER	As above -- for mother
BIRTH-ORDER	First or second born (0); later born (1)
CHOSEN-FATHER	Chosen by father when there was a problem (1); Not chosen as a confidant (0)
CHOSEN-MOTHER	Same as above -- for mother
EDUCATION	Some college or less (0); College or university degree (1)
CHILDREARING-FATHER	Some disagreements with child concerning childrearing practice (0); No such disagreements (1)
CHILDREARING-MOTHER	Same for mother
SIBS-FATHER	Some disagreements father with how child treats siblings (0); No such disagreements (1)
SIBS-MOTHER	Same as above -- for mother
PARENTS-FATHER	Some disagreements father with how child treats parents (0) No such disagreements (1)
PARENTS-MOTHER	Same as above -- for mother
GET TOGETHER-FATHER	Some disagreements father with how often child gets together with parents (0); No such disagreements (1)
GET TOGETHER-MOTHER	Same as above -- for mother

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